

Take Two

by synchthebeat

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Summary: A phone call after practice is enough to turn Tsukishima's life upside down. As he struggles to cope, he realises that maybe, just maybe, trusting people isn't such a bad thing; that maybe, just maybe, he can start over and give his relationship-making within the volleyball team another shot.

1. Day One

**A/N: **Okay, so really, if someone's my favourite character, the only thing I want to see them in...is angst shit. So this fic is honestly just an excuse for me to write some Tsukishima angst, ahah. I have to say that in all honesty, I'm not confident in writing ANY of the characters from Haikyuu! and actually keep them in-character so there'll be a lot of out of character stuff and I'm sorry 'bout that, but I'll try my best.

I was originally planning on writing it all first and THEN uploading it so I could routinely update it, but then I realised that I might want to change parts of it depending on reviews or whatever, so I'm just going to go ahead and start it. That does mean that I can't predict when chapters'll be added - it could take months, for all I know - but I'll definitely keep it going because Kei is wonderful and I just want to see him in angst stuff.

All I know about Tsukishima's family is that he has a mum and he has Akiteru but I need two parents to make this thing work so I'm totally making up shit about his family in this.

* * *

><p>Nothing is abnormal about that day; it's a simple, sunny Tuesday evening with sweaty high school boys cleaning up after themselves following their normal, daily volleyball practice. Nothing odd has occurred throughout training: no one has injured themselves and no one has made any life-changing revelations. All Tsukishima has left

to do is get changed and then he can head back home with Yamaguchi and everything will stay normal. Absolutely nothing will change.<p>

That's how most of their days are.

That's how most of their days should be.

Tsukishima can hear the roars of Hinata and Kageyama as they race back to the locker room; he can hear the spirited voices of Nishinoya and Tanaka; he can hear the gentle voice of Sugawara; he can hear the commanding voice of Daichi, but what he can't hear is his own pathetically spiteful voice. Being loud isn't a particular hobby of his, but sometimes sometimes he wonders what their relationships would be like if he voiced all of his thoughts out loud; if he tried to be as caring as Sugawara; if he tried to be enthusiastic about volleyball. Sometimes he wonders what their relationships would be like if he was just friendly. _

Yamaguchi says something to the blonde, but he misses it, too caught up in his own thoughts and all he can do is stare blankly and ask what he just said. "It's nothing, don't worry about it," is what his friend says back to him and honestly, he's perfectly fine with it.

If Tsukishima keeps most of his words hidden, then Yamaguchi is perfectly welcome to as well.

When the blonde gets a chance to look at his phone when the pair make it back to the noisy changing room, he notices his father has tried to call him during practice and he can't help but frown. Not at the fact his father has called him though that in itself is a bit of a surprise but at the eight missed calls he has received from him.

"What's wrong, Tsukki?"

He hears Yamaguchi's voice from beside him and glances sideways, that frown still adorning his features. "I-It's nothing. I'm just gonna make a phone call," is his response, as he presses the redial button and gently opens and shuts the changing room door.

"Kei! Where are you!?" The desperation on the other side of the line sticks an unnerving weight in Tsukishima's stomach.

"I'm at school. I've just finished practice, why?"

"Your mother and Akiteru have been involved in a car crash â€" you need to get to the hospital right now!"

Tsukishima's heart stops. Everything goes silent around him as he processes the words that have just been spoken. Mum and Akiteru are in the hospital? He isn't sure what to say back he isn't sure what to do. One part is shouting at him, screaming at him to get to that damn fucking hospital ASAP while another isn't saying anything at all can't say anything at all. He isn't sure how to move, where to move to, where he even is but then just as soon as he wonders that, everything clicks back into place and he's back outside the locker rooms and his dad's just told him that they're in the hospital and he needs to respond. _

"Kei?"

"A-Are they all right?" The blonde is painfully aware of how calm his voice sounds, ignoring the stutter, and he isn't sure why because he doesn't feel calm at all, he wants to fucking leave and get to the hospital but why isn't he just rushing? Why isn't he bursting into the building behind him, grabbing his stuff and making a bolt for it?

And it's while his thoughts are going that Tsukishima realises that this silence has went for too long.

"You don't need to lie to me, Dad. I'm going to figure out anyway."

"Iâ€¦I don't know, Kei. No one knows. It'sâ€¦bad enough they're in ICU, though." And that's enough to have his blood run cold and his heart not stopping, but getting faster and he's pretty sure he can feel his hands shivering and he feels sick but he needs to get to the hospitalâ€"he needs to get to the hospital. "I'll meet you in front of the main entrance, okay?" And Tsukishima doesn't even reply before hanging up and throwing his phone into his pocket.

Without any further delay, the giant pulls open the door, accidentally slamming it against the outside wall with a louder bang than he means and dashes into the room. He thinks he's banged into someone and he hears a voice like someone's shouting but he isn't sure who it is or what they're saying, all he's focused on is pulling his volleyball shoes off and swapping them with his usual outdoor shoes and he doesn't even bother changing his clothes, he just grabs what's sitting out and tries desperately to shove them all into his bag but it's not working they aren't fitting and it's even clearer now how loud his breathing is and how fast his heart is beating because he can't hear anything but himself and he's not even sure if anyone's there anymore but he can hear voices and he can feel hands touching him, trying to pull him away, trying to calm him down but he's shoving and slapping them all away and those voices seem to be gaining in volume but he doesn't know who they are, doesn't know what they're saying, so they don't matter. "Shit! Fucking go in!" Tsukishima's hands are shaking even more than they were before and he can barely keep his hands in one place and he can't control what he's doing like this and nothing's going in because of it, nothing's fucking going in and he's trying to punch his clothes in now and he's shouting obscenities left, right and centre and he's pretty sure those hands on his body are treating him rougher and really trying to pull him away but every time an arm gets pulled away, he pulls it back and he gives up, he fucking gives up and zips what he can, has to try more than once because his hands are too shaky, sleeves and legs sticking out of one side and he doesn't even bother putting in his water bottle, he just picks it up and runs because he doesn't have the fucking time. _

When the blonde turns round he's greeted by faces - angry faces, scared faces, concerned faces but he has no idea who they belong to and he doesn't even care; all he can do is shove past them all with staggering force as, shaky and panicky, he bolts towards the door. "Yamaguchi, go home without me!" is all he shouts as he remembers that yes, his friend was in there and he doesn't know if his friend is still in there but he's shouting back anyway, hoping

that he _is _still in there and all he does after thatâ€"all he _can _do after thatâ€"is _run._

* * *

><p>When Tsukishima, shaking and breathless, meets up with his father outside of the large building, he doesn't have to say anythingâ€"more like he can't say anything he's so out of breathâ€"before he's being lead inside. Hospitals have never been particularly high up on Tsukishima's list of places he's happy to go and it's only now, as he's walking briskly with his father to the waiting room, that he remembers why. The horrible smell of antiseptic and bleach is the first thing that hits him the moment he steps through those automatic double doors and he's sure his nausea's getting worse. The ground underneath his feet is white, as blank as his mind is as he tries to register again just where he is and what he's doing and why he's here and who he's with. The walls surrounding him down the hallway are a light green, as if trying to add some life to the place but it doesn't work at all because all it reminds him of is the horrible feeling building up in his stomach and he can't help but hold a hand over his mouth and nose.

The boy remains oblivious to the way his dad looks down at him with worry, even when they enter the ward and take a seat in the waiting room. Tsukishima hates it hereâ€"he fucking _hates _it here. He's sure â€" so fucking sure â€" that that was the reason he never dashed off straight away. Running away from the hospital is an admittance to the fact that hospitals make him feel like someone's trying to pull his guts up his throat; running to the hospital is an admittance to the fact that something really fucking horrible is happening. No matter what choice he'd chosen, he'd never win.

He misses when his father says that he's going off to ask for an update on his mum and Akiteru's conditionsâ€"in fact, he never even notices he's gone. All he can take in is the sound of crying, the sound of shouting, the sound of the clacking of nurses' shoes, the sound of a bed being wheeled through the ward. He thinks he can hear his father's voice now but he doesn't know what he's saying, doesn't _want _to know what he's saying and all these sounds are deafening and he feels even worse than he did before he arrived and he's trying to take deep breaths now, tries to slouch down in an attempt to tell his body that it shouldn't care, but it doesn't listen, just makes him feel worse instead and he doesn't know what to do anymore to stop himself from potentially vomiting all over a hospital floor.

Sure, these places are suited to that kind of thing, but Tsukishima definitely doesn't want to stay in here any longer than he has to.

Suddenly, a large, warm hand clamps over one of the hands tapping drum beats on his thighs â€" something the boy hadn't even been aware he'd been doing â€" and gold eyes turn to look beside him where they meet with his father's. "Kei, did you hear what I said?" that deep rumble gently asks, eyes filled with concern for his son. Tsukishima doesn't say anything out loud, just stares with a blank face and hopes that just showing his confusion suffices as a negative answer. "Akiteru's a lot more stable than he was when he was first brought in."

Already? Tsukishima thinks, dragging his view across to the clock

tick-tocking high up on the opposite wall and then he realises just how long it's been. He doesn't understand how two hours have already passed since leaving the schoolâ€"it felt nothing like itâ€"and though the news of his brother should make him happy, no smile appears on his face. _He could still die. _That pessimistic thought is all it takes to destroy any and all of the boy's optimistic ones. _And he's still not said anything about Mum. _

Man, he really fucking doesn't want to be here.

"Kei, if being here makes you feel uncomfortable, you don't need to stay." As if reading his mind, his father speaks and tightly squeezes the blonde's hand even furtherâ€"Tsukishima's pretty sure that's more for his dad's reassurance than his own. Honestly, he wants to go home. He just wants to go home, get in his bed, sleep and forget everything that ever happened today. But it's the reality that something like this doesn't get sorted overnight and Kei knows that as well as his father does. "So long as you keep your phone switched on, I can phone you if anything changes."

But if anything, this is the one time that Tsukishima doesn't want to act like a total selfish dick; doesn't want to leave his mum and Akiteru because he couldn't control his stomach.

So he shakes his head. "'m fine here, Dad," he mutters, beginning to fidget with the cuffs of his hoodie.

"Are you sure?"

Tsukishima considers lying, but the frighteningly stern look being sent his way intimidates him enough to tell the truth. "â€|Not really. But leaving Mum and Akiteru here because I can't handle sitting in a hospital isn't something I want to do." For a while, father and son simply stare into each other's eyes, silence stretching for longer than is comfortable for either of them until Tsukishima's father speaks up with a sigh.

"All right. But if you change your mind, you can just leave, okay?"

"'kay."

It's only after Tsukishima's wish to act selfless for once that he realises it was a really, _really _big mistake. Only twenty minutes pass before the boy is even more fidgety than before and he can't keep his head in one place and there's always at least one leg jiggling up and down and that tapping is just simple repetitive tapping now, not some fancy drum beat at all and there's a fly, there's a fly crawling along the clock face and it distracts himâ€"distracts him until it flies away and he's back to his useless attempts at calming down.

_Am I even trying to calm myself down? _the blonde wonders as he realises that he really can't stop and what the _fuck _is wrong with him?

That nausea from before hasn't disappeared once, not even when his dad came back with water and pretty much forced him to drink itâ€"not that he minded. He still hadn't had a proper drink or meal since coming out from practice but really, he isn't in the mood to eat

anything. From the looks of things, his appetite's ran away along with his calm and all he can do is desperately hope they both come back. Thinking about the water reminds him that he's still thirsty and that his bottle of water is still tucked messily into the side pocket of his bag, where he'd spent the time to stick it in while he was on the train.

The minute he reaches down to grab at his bag, a wave of pain shoots into his head and his hands go straight to it. "Fuck!" he whispers under his breath, taking deep breaths as he comes to grip with the new problem he has to deal with and _fucking hell _can he not just sit here totally perfectly fine?

"Kei?"

Tsukishima hears the worried tone of his father's voice and curses even more internally. A hand settles on his back and starts gently massaging it and really, it feels nice, but, though it isn't being outwardly spoken, he knows his dad won't let that sudden grip of his forehead go without a reason being given. "My head's pounding," is what comes out through gritted teeth and Tsukishima berates himself for being so straightforward with what was wrong, for not making the pain seem not as bad even if his father would have seen through it, but he knows he can't change that and he's so much more fucking _pissed. _

"I really do think you should go home."

I want to.

"No, Dad, I can't."

Why can't I?

"I've already said I can phone you or text you if something changes."

Why don't I just leave?

"But Dad, I can't just go away when Mum and Akiteru areâ€|"

Why do I need to be here?

"Kei, you being here isn't going to change a thingâ€"you can't do anything for either of them."

_That's just it. I don't. _

Tsukishima can't say anything back to that and he doesn't because he knows it's true. He can sit here all night and all day, but his presence won't mean a thing. Even if his mum and Akiteru are stable, his presence won't heal their bodies. All he can do is watch on from the sidelines, just uselessly stand there and berate himself for how little he can do to save anybody.

The blonde doesn't say anything when he finally stands up, head still throbbing, nausea still lingering, frustration still growing and when his father asks where he's going, the only thing he says is, "Home."

But though he calls it home, he knows that right now, that building is nothing more than a simple house.

* * *

><p>The minute Tsukishima steps in through the front door, pulls off his shoes and sets down his bag, the first place he goes is the bathroom. Just being in his house is enough to have him vomiting and he's lucky he manages to make it to his toilet before anything comes out. Every retch he hears coming from him just makes him feel worse and worse and he doesn't even know how long it takes until he stops.</p>

Yet, regardless of how wretched he feels, Tsukishima just can't seem to find it in him to cry. No tears fallâ€"no tears even threaten to escape.

After flushing the toilet and taking a drink of the leftover water in the bottle hiding in his bag, the blonde goes straight for a bath, wanting nothing more than to rid himself of the disgusting feeling he feels deep within his body, but even after staying in there for a good twenty minutes, no particle of that horridness is gone and he fucking _hates _it. He can't even force food down himself or he's pretty sure he'll just throw up even more of it, so he finds the strap of his bag and slowly drags it back to his room.

When he turns on his phone, he realises he has a missed call and a text from Yamaguchi. The boy has no intention of calling him back, but he at least looks at the text, deciding that totally ignoring his friend is not in any way the best course of action if he wants to not be totally interrogated the next day.

Tsukki, are you okay?

Those four words are all that spread across his screen and for a while, all he can do is stare. _Is _he okay? Could he genuinely type in those words and mean it? Right now, he isn't sure. He doesn't know how he feels anymore. The fact of the matter is that his mum and Akiteru could still die, butâ€¦if they did, there'd be no helping it, right? Them being in a car crash isn't something he can just magically changeâ€"he can't go into the past and change what happened like those sci-fi movies he sometimes catches on the TV. If their bodies decide to give up on themâ€¦then he can't help that.

I'm fine.

And that's all he sends back in response.

* * *

><p>AN: **He's totally fine, guys.

Okay, so I think the next chapter's going to be really long - I haven't actually finished it - because I think it's spanning the whole day...? Because nothing really end-of-chapter worthy appears until, well, the end of the day. Well, actually, there's a part closer to the end, but then there wouldn't really be much to write in the next chapter so. So yeah, long chapter next, heck yeah.

Little note at the end that will appear at the end of every chapter:

if you want to see something happen in this, suggest it to me and I might put it in, especially if it's a good idea.

2. Day Two - Morning - Early Evening

**A/N: **It's here!

I think there's a lot of useless info in this, I apologise a lot. Plus my writing seems to deteriorate the more I write, sorry about that as well.

I've found a place to cut it so that the chapter containing the rest of the day will be a good enough length for me to consider it as a proper chapter. It won't be as long as this you might be pleased (or not so pleased, depending) to know, but it should be an okay length so you don't feel as irritated when it ends.

In regards to when this takes place, I've decided it'll be after the Inter-High, pretty soon before the training camp with Nekoma and Fukurodani. What happens there'll have nothing to do with the canon storyline. As a matter of fact, neither will anything after it, really. Everything'll just totally diverge. Nothing that really happens in the main story will be covered in this fic at all, ahah.

I also need to thank my friend, Teide, for proof reading and helping me sort through ideas! Actually, she helped me with the first chapter as well and I forgot to say...

ALSO. Thank you so much for all the review and the favourites and the follows! I've never gotten so much attention for a first chapter before (and to be honest, it's not even that much attention compared to other fics out there). I'll try hard not to disappoint you all, ahah.

* * *

><p>Tsukishima wakes up like usual. He gets changed like usual. He gets his stuff ready like usual. But though he washes his face and brushes his teeth like usual, he doesn't have breakfast like usual. The eerie silence of the Tsukishima household makes it clear to the blonde that his appetite still isn't presentâ€"that it still hasn't returned to him. It never ran rampant in the first place, but at least he used to be able to hear it in this house of his; completely unlike now. The house is silent, the house is unmoving. No voices shout him down, no voices will bid him goodbye. Everyone is away, no one is around. It's just Kei and the confusion in his head.<p>

Nothing has sunk in.

The subconscious part of the boy's mind is trying desperately to _stop it _from sinking in. Because if it does, he's pretty sure he won't cope. He'll go to school, passive as always, spiteful as always, dickish as always, but behind it all, he'll have to hide his inability to copeâ€"in fact, he'll have to keep the hospitalisation of Akiteru and his mother hidden as well, he won't even tell Yamaguchi because none of them need to know; it's none of their business. If they ask, all he has to do is avoid the question or

glare at them and they'll back off, right? None of them really particularly care enough to persist with the questioning, he's sure. But when he reaches home â€“ when he reaches the solitary of his room â€“ even he doesn't know what he'll do.

As horrible as Tsukishima feels, he knows that he'll never last through the day if he doesn't eat something, but he can't even look at the kitchen without feeling like he's going to spew. Guess I gotta grab something though, huh? he thinks, hands clenching into unbelievably tight fists as he takes slow, deep breaths in preparation for the unbelievable objective he's given himself. All I've got to do is grab a banana or something, grab a couple bottles of water from the fridge and then leave. That's all I've got to do. He takes one last deep breath, before shoving his feet into the floor and giving one massive push as he dashes into the kitchen. He knows where everything is so he runs, runs and doesn't focus on where he is, just focuses on getting what he needsâ€“that's all he needs to focus on.

The minute the blonde makes it away from the cooking area, he dumps everything he's grabbed on the floor and focuses on his breathing, attempting to shove down the bile he can feel building up in his throat. He places a hand over his face, grabbing each side with his fingers as he turns round and leans against the cream wall with his head. Just breathe, he tells himself, deliberately making his breaths loud so he's sure he can hear himself breathing. Those same two words repeat in his head like a mantra, over and over again, side by side in the merry-go-round circling in his mind.

"Oh, fuck!" Tsukishima's attempts at calming his insides down are interrupted when a sudden sharp pain bursts along his left palm. "What was that?" Removing himself from his support, he quickly turns his hand over, a plip, plap! simultaneously accompanying it. Golden eyes widen as he watches blood gather in his palm, being vomited from crescent moon indentations. Are these from my nailsâ€|!? he asks himself, staring in confusion and slight wonder at the red liquid building upâ€“puddles joining together as he stares. He snaps out of his trance as he notices a stream of blood sliding down the side and he quickly throws his other hand underneath to catch it.

Feelings of sickness completely forgotten about, the boy quickly rushes to his bathroomâ€“not the kitchenâ€ before swiftly turning on the cold water as he searches for what he needs in the medicine cabinet above his head. The liquid stings his hand as he scrambles and scrambles through the piles of unnecessary medicines sitting in there, and he can't help but screw up his face and bite deeply into his bottom lip to avoid himself from crying out.

The blonde manages to find a couple of antiseptic wipes, but with no plasters rearing their heads, he settles for a dressing instead. In all honesty, he doesn't want to use something so noticeableâ€“he'll already have the volleyball club questioning his actions from the day before, but having a bandage round his hand will just increase the number of enquiries floating round their heads. Though difficult, Tsukishima somehow manages to clean, dress and bandage the wound all with using only one hand, his mouth, his cheek and his chin. It's nothing spectacular â€“ first aid isn't really something he's superb at â€“ but it'll do its job and really, that's all he cares about.

Tsukishima is surprised when he realises it's still fifteen minutes before the time he usually leaves " _Maybe because I didn't have breakfast? " _so he takes the time to clean up any of the blood staining his hands or the sink and replace everything in the medicine cabinet before leaving to deal with what he left on the floor.

Contrary to what he'd originally planned, Tsukishima had actually grabbed an odd handful of cereal bars because really, bananas were yellow and at the moment, that wasn't a very appealing colour, considering that unnerving sickening feeling was beginning to gather again and he fucking hated it. Deciding he'd rather leave than stay, the boy shoves all but one of the cereal bars into his bag along with the bottles of water "he can fill up his sports bottle later or even just drink the water from the original bottles because really that's easier and what the fuck is his mind blabbering on about? _That isn't an important issue right now, _he scolds himself, frowning as he slings his bag over his shoulder and makes his way to the exit.

And it's as he walks there, hearing his socks flump lightly against the wooden floor, that he realises he doesn't know what to do. If he calls back, he'll be calling back to nothing, but saying goodbye is something that's become a habit. To just suddenly be stripped of it "it's so sudden that he's not sure what he should be doing at all. His arms stay limp by his side, one hand loosely gripping the cereal bar, and his golden eyes uselessly stare at his shoes as he stands there and stands there and stands there and does nothing but stare as something sinks in.

But what that something actually is is what Tsukishima doesn't know.

The blonde closes his eyes; he takes a deep breath; he clenches his fists tight; he releases that deep breath; and slowly, ever so slowly, he opens his eyes again. With unfeeling calm, he drags his feet forward and shoves them into his shoes. He takes one more deep breath, as if for good luck, and opens the door, letting the bright sunlight filter in and hit him right in the face.

Tsukishima can't help but squint at the sudden assault and a sigh squeezes past his lips. He wants to stay inside, but he doesn't want to stay in the house standing behind him. He wants to escape from the sun, but it'll chase him no matter where he goes. He isn't ready for the sun today, especially not the one that'll be waiting for him at school. All he wants to do is run, run and just keep on running and hope, _hope so bad_, that there'll be somewhere that he can hide, somewhere that he can cower, somewhere that he can let what's happened sink in, somewhere that he can just throw away the Tsukishima everyone knows and just break.

But he knows that there isn't anywhere like that. Not for someone like him.

When Tsukishima meets up with Yamaguchi, the smaller's morning greeting is responded to with a simple grunt "he really does _not_ want to have to talk any more today than he needs to, and if he isn't being given permission to run and hide, then at the very least, he should be allowed to do that. The blonde can feel his friend's dark eyes staring right at him "examining him" and he can feel a shiver running up his back as he walks.

Silence stretches out between them for a long, long while, but the

whole time, Tsukishima can feel Yamaguchi's intense gaze never falling, as if trying to read his soul. In fact, it would make sense if he was. The taller's, "I'm fine" text was clearly not true in any sense of the word: suddenly hitting and pushing past people while sprinting out of a changing room was not a common occurrence. It's more than obvious that he's going to get some majorly questioning glances and angered threats the moment he steps into that clubroom, especially with the addition of the bandage round his hand. In fact, he's amazed Yamaguchi hasn't asked a single thing about it by this point.

"Are you honestly okay, Tsukki?"

Yamaguchi's abrupt question of concern catches Tsukishima off-guard and the rhythmic tapping of his shoes is interrupted when he accidentally stops for the slightest second. Hoping that it was brief enough that his friend never noticed, the boy turns his head slightly to look at him and nonchalantly responds with a, "Of course I am. Why?" If there was anything else physically wrong about him besides the bandage, he could at least try his best to sort it before the rest of the volleyball club sees him again.

"No reason, really. You just seemed really odd yesterday when you were leaving."

Yeah, he knows. He fucking knows. . .

"And you seem a bit out of it today."

"There's really nothing wrong, Yamaguchi," is all Tsukishima says in response. And though it's clear Yamaguchi doesn't believe him, he nods and continues walking in silence. In all honesty, some part of the blonde feels guilty hiding his situation from his friend. The overpowering concern the other feels for him is more than clear from those furtive glances he continues to send his way after his staring period has finished, and the guilt won't stop constricting round his chest and it hurts. Why can't I just trust him? he asks, teeth now biting down into his lower lip. He wouldn't tell anyone if I didn't want him to, so why do I have to make him suffer as well? He's so fucking angry, not just at himself, but at Yamaguchi. . .

Why the actual fuck is that kid wasting time worrying about him?

"Um. Are you going to eat that?"

Golden eyes travel down to the cereal bar clenched tightly in his un-bandaged hand and he quickly loosens his hold. He'd completely forgotten he'd even brought it with him. "Yeah. If you want it, I can give it to you though."

"No, I don't want it! I was just wondering since you've been holding it for a while."

Tsukishima doesn't even reply—he simply rips the packet open and brings it toward his mouth. But before he can even spread apart his lips, he stops and stares at the bar of oats. His hand clenches tight once again as he realises that eating this is something that he doesn't want to do and he's pretty sure he'll throw it back up if he tries. The blonde isn't even aware of the grey eyes watching him

anymore as he takes a deep breath and begins worrying his bottom lip. One more deep breath and he finally allows his long fingers to move the cereal bar to his teeth.

He bites, but barely, snagging off only one of the corners and he has to focus on his breathing as he attempts to force the small fragment down. Even once he chews it into minute pieces, he still hesitates before swallowing, and unconsciously tightens his fingers when he does. Why is this so hard? Again, he tries, attempting to make the bitten-off section that tad bit bigger, but it becomes even more difficult, having to chew it even more before he eventually swallows.

Honestly, he doesn't want to continue his whole trip to school in this manner, trying to force oats to go down his throat, so he can't do anything else but pull the wrapper back up and over his supposed-to-be breakfast and shove it into his trouser pocket.

It's only now he remembers Yamaguchi's presence and he curses in his head as he turns slightly in an attempt to gauge the kid's reaction, but the moment he turns to look, the smaller turns away. Tsukishima sighs to himself, and he doesn't even care if the other hears. It's not even been an hour since I've left and I've already screwed up._

The next time the blonde sneaks a glance at Yamaguchi, he makes it more discreetâ€"doesn't let any part of his body move too far to his right so that the kid doesn't suspect anythingâ€"and it's then that he notices those curious eyes staring daggers into the bandage round his left hand.

Feeling more than a little self-conscious, Tsukishima doesn't even try to hide the fact that he's noticed Yamaguchi staring at his unexplained injury as he pulls down on his blazer sleeve and tucks the limb closer to his body and further out of the sight of his inquisitive friend. Their eyes meet for a split second and the moment they do, Tsukishima turns away out of guilt. Again, he begins worrying his bottom lip and he doesn't get thisâ€"he doesn't get it at all. Why the fuck is he so bothered? He's managed to keep all manners of faÃ§ades up, each and every one of them absolutely flawless, for a number of years that he's lost count of. So why can't he manage it now?

"Tsukki, I hope you don't mind me asking, but, uhmâ€| "

And already, the dreaded question rears its head.

"You're going to ask about my hand, aren't you?"

"â€| !"

"I'm surprised you didn't ask sooner."

Tsukishima speaks as if it isn't a big dealâ€"as if it's nothing all that special. But the boy can feel his heart hammering inside of his chest, threatening to escape with each step he takes. He doesn't know how he should answer the question that Yamaguchi never managed to say before he piped in. He doesn't know if he should be honest, he doesn't know if he should lie. If he tells the truth, there's no doubt in the blonde's mind that his friend would tell someone about

it, ask them for advice and end up getting them curious, or perhaps, Yamaguchi might even start gaining confidence in himself and end up sticking his nose in where it shouldn't belong, start gaining the confidence in himself he needs to cross the line and stay over it. If he lies, even if Yamaguchi realises he's lying, Tsukishima knows he won't say anything back about it because the kid would be way too frightened to and he's smart enough to know when an unwanted question has been brought out and really, that is a much more favourable and trouble-free outcome.

With his choice decided, Yamaguchi's, "Soâ€|what did you do to it?" doesn't throw him off, doesn't leave him panicking as he tries to figure out what he should do. Instead, he opens his mouth and responds with little to no hesitation.

"I was helping with dinner last night and accidentally cut myself."

"Does that mean you're going to miss practice today?"

"â€|No. I'd rather not get shouted at by the third years. Or the coach, for that matter. I'll just need to watch out for my hand when I'm blocking." Tsukishima's sure Yamaguchi's realised that that isn't the reason he's still going to practice from the way he clams up and says nothing more as they continue their walk to school.

If he delays going back to practice for too long, he's more than sure that the complaints fired at him will be much more worse and much more troublesome than the ones that are already sure to be fired at him for yesterday's incident.

Despite the somewhat tense atmosphere their silence causes, part of it actually relaxes the blonde, having to do nothing but walk and not having to think of believable excuses or try to force out words that he doesn't even want to waste energy speaking.

It's an uncomfortable silence, but a silence that Tsukishima welcomes with open arms regardless and embraces while it lasts.

* * *

><p>Contrary to what he imagined, walking into the changing room was a surprisingly quiet event. But though little voices were directed at him, he could feel people's heads turnâ€"could feel people's eyes staring right into him. He couldn't tell who without scanning, but the moment he catches someone â€" like Sugawara or Kageyama â€" they instantly turn away. A frown ends up permanently plastered to his face as he gets changed because he knows that everyone wants to question him; wants to know just what the fuck happened with him yesterday. But no one says a thing, and though he doesn't really want to be asked anything, it still pisses him off.—

"Ah! Your hand!"

Tsukishima doesn't need to turn round to know that it's Hinata speaking. Tsukishima doesn't need to turn round to also know that he's referring to him.—

"â€|What about it?" the blonde mutters grumpily, pulling over his

usual white t-shirt, carefully ensuring that he grips the fabric with the fingertips of his left hand rather than digging the digits right into his palm.

"What did you do to it?"

"Just cut it with a knife when I was making dinner last night." He isn't sure if the excuse works—he doesn't turn round in time to be able to judge properly—but Hinata says no more after, so he can't do anything else but hope it at least keeps the shrimp's curiosity at bay for now.

Still nothing on yesterday though, he notes, starting to fidget somewhat uncomfortably with the hem of his t-shirt as he pulls out his shorts.

"Will you still be able to block okay?" It's Daichi now.

"Should be. It's nothing big," he replies, grumpiness cowering now that his captain was speaking.

"If it hurts though, make sure you tell us, okay?" Sugawara's concerned voice reaches him and he simply nods, uncertain of how sincere—or insincere—that one gesture came across.

Tsukishima feels surprisingly grateful for the orange-haired boy letting his curiosity pull the question of his hand out of him here, while they were in the changing room: none of them have left early and the blonde feels like it has something to do with him, but regardless of the reason, having them all here while he answers Hinata's question on his bandage just means he's answered the question for all of them and really, it's nice to know he's just killed nine birds with one stone.

Although that relief is there, the blonde notices that the activity and liveliness that usually permeates the room isn't. It's louder than it was before—he can hear Hinata and Kageyama and Nishinoya and Tanaka all making a scene as if attempting to break the uncomfortableness caressing the room, and he can hear Daichi and Sugawara and Asahi and Ennoshita and Kinoshita and Narita all piping in now and again as if in an attempt to help them—but it's useless. Even more so with how silent Yamaguchi is beside him, taking a short drink of his water, almost as if he needs an excuse to do something. Tsukishima knows that his friend is worried knows his whole club is worried, even the ones that might hate his personality but it means nothing to him. In fact, all it really does is just piss him off to an incredibly large extent.

The walls that Tsukishima had built since first joining aren't easily broken; the walls that Tsukishima had built since Akiteru and his mum's hospitalisation are even harder to break. To know that people he'd never been particularly nice to were the ones trying to force their way through those walls was something that the blonde couldn't comprehend, was something that angered him. There was absolutely no need for these people to be wasting time on him none at all.

Their concern is something that Kei doesn't want and knows that he never will.

* * *

><p>"Hey, what did you do to your hand?"<p>

Tsukishima curses in his head when he hears Coach Ukai's voice reverberating across the hall towards him—"he'd completely forgotten about him. Takeda, too. He sighs quietly to himself before opening his mouth and raising his voice"—though not quite to the level of shouting—"and uses the same excuse he's used everywhere else:

"Cut my hand on a knife, sir."

Well, okay, maybe he could have added the fact he'd been apparently cooking dinner, because really, that sentence alone raises some major questions, but he doesn't receive any more questions about how the injury came about. Instead, he gets asked if he'll be okay during practice today—if he'll manage during the three-on-three they had planned after school.

"I'll be fine, sir,"

is his next response and the blonde is pretty sure his voice is already starting to sound fed-up. As much respect as he has for the coach and advisor, he can't be bothered dealing with this shit today. All he wanted to do was come to school and hopefully take his mind off of what happened the day before at least a little bit, but the wound he's caused himself is in no way helping with that and neither is the constant questions. At least I don't feel so sick, he observes in thankfulness, walking around not such a horrible experience any longer, but he was painfully aware of a headache starting up again and he hoped to the gods that no volleyballs slammed into his face or he'd probably just storm off.

Practice goes by in the blink of an eye for the blonde, mainly because he blanks out for most of it and doesn't even remember properly hitting anything. All he can remember is balls flying past his head or attacking his arms, attacking his legs, attacking his shoulders, not attacking his face because he made sure that that was one thing that never happened. He can remember being shouted at by the coach, by Kageyama, by Tanaka and he also remembers how he either stared blankly at them or gave a quiet half-hearted apology. The look of surprise on everyone's faces each time it happened were the same—but concern also gradually blended its way in. The blonde actually thought he could see some worry in Kageyama's eyes, and it felt—odd. Odd to have the King genuinely concerned about him—"the fact he wasn't outwardly expressing it making it clear to the taller that yes, that attention he was giving to him was very, scarily real."

The boy can remember being approached many times asking if he was okay and all he could do was nod or say the usual, "I'm fine". He can remember being asked if his hand hurt, if he maybe wanted to rest for a bit, and his only responses were, "It doesn't hurt," or, "I can still continue". Tsukishima knows that none of them believe him, but if they won't admit it, then neither will he.

One thing that Tsukishima doesn't remember though, is being asked about his sudden panic yesterday and that does nothing but unnerve him.

* * *

><p>School passes by without too much taking place, though his inability to focus paired up with his hand injury has many of his teachers concerned â€“ since really, Tsukishima is a good student and he wouldn't be unfocused without reason, surely, and bandages round hands aren't exactly normal â€“ and so many of them ask him if he's okay and what he's done to his hand and the blonde starts to get so fucking sick of it so he tries, really fucking _tries _to focus, but it's so hard to do and he can't help but start doodling rubbish in his jotters until it looks like someone from the art department's shit all over them. Not that he particularly minds the unorganised mess his lined sheets of paper have turned intoâ€“if the teachers disapprove, he can just rip them out later and then they won't have any reason to shout at him about it. Any notes he's missed from today, he can steal from Yamaguchi or something, because right now, he's pretty sure he won't take in anything that he writes; he doesn't even remember what he's been drawing.

Tsukishima can't really remember much right now.

When lunch comes around, something that Tsukishima _does _remember is that he forgot to make himself anything to eat. Sure, he's got those cereal bars, but that's sure to raise some eyebrows from Yamaguchi. _Having nothing'll probably raise them higher though, huh? _With a sigh, he pulls out the leftover oats from this morning and begins slowly nibbling his way through, staring out the window as the smaller pulls a chair over. Eating becomes relatively easier with the absence of that overpowering nauseous feeling, but his appetite is still nowhere to be found and he isn't sure why.

"Is that the one from this morning?" Yamaguchi asks, as he settles down and begins opening the lunch that his mother had prepared for him.

"Mm." The noise isn't really a positive or a negative answer, but the way the fingers of Tsukishima's left hand begin playing between themselves â€“ a habit Yamaguchi couldn't help but notice his friend did when he was lying or nervous â€“ tips the other off to the real answer: yes. Yes, it was. But I don't want you asking any more about it.

But this is one of those times where Yamaguchi isn't going to give up as easily in getting something useful out of the blonde.

"Tsukki, have youâ€¦been feeling okay?" he hesitantly asks, finding every ounce of strength he can to stop himself from cowering away.

The blonde can't help but sigh. That is one question he's been asked way too much today and every time he gets asked it, he can feel the fuse holding in his anger starting to melt. "Yeah. Why?" he asks, eyes flicking to his friend.

"You don't seemâ€¦very focused today." Not wanting to say too much, Yamaguchi stops there, the glare now being sent his way causing his whole body to tense right up. "Isâ€¦something going on?" If looks could kill, the black-haired boy would be dead, no doubt about it. That one question is enough to have Tsukishima's eyes narrowing

further, a scowl plain on his face, almost as if he were ready to murder the kid right on the spotâ€"that look is all it takes to have Yamaguchi apologizing and completely averting his gaze from the taller.

_How shit of a person am I, anyway? _Tsukishima asks himself, running a hand through his hair as he takes a deep breath in an attempt to calm himself. _Yamaguchi hasn't done anything wrong. _The boy opens his mouth to apologise, but then stops. Really, sincere apologies have never come easily and trying to say one now is justâ€|way too difficult. _Gotta do it though, don't I? _In a somewhat reserved manner, the blonde fully turns his head to Yamaguchi and, chin near his chest, eyes upturned, the boy mutters a, "Sorry".

His friend's reaction isn't immediate, as if he were questioning what he'd heardâ€"if maybe, he just completely, totally misheard Tsukishima, if maybe, he hadn't said anything at all. But the light dash of red on his cheeks and the way he fidgets with his cereal bar and the way he's trying so hard, but failing, to keep his eyes on him proves that yes, the blonde really had just apologised to him.

"N-No, it's okay!" he quickly reassures, waving his hands in front of him. "I know you've been asked it a lot already â€" I'd get pretty fed up too if I were you."

Tsukishima manages an awkward smile in some odd show of appreciation at his friend for making the effort to understand him rather than just getting angry at him for not seeming to appreciate his worry for him. The look of surprise that seems to perpetually cover Yamaguchi's features makes the blonde start to feel self-conscious and he instantly covers the curve up of his lips with the last section of his cereal bar, heat spreading even further through his face.

A silence spreads between them but it's definitely a much more comfortable silence than any they've had so far, and the blonde can feel himself relaxing.

That is, until Yamaguchi speaks again.

"Is that cereal bar all you're having for lunch?"

The minute his friend asks that, Tsukishima can't even move his golden eyes anywhere near the other. Embarrassment and guilt spreading throughout his bodyâ€"though he isn't quite sure whyâ€"he slowly nods, fingers again beginning to fidget between themselves.

"Shouldn't you have something more? I mean, you're going to practice after school, aren't you?"

Another nod â€" to the second question, not the first â€" yet nothing leaves his mouth.

"Do you...want some of my lunch?"

Honestly, Tsukishima wants to refuse; he already feels unbelievably full despite only eating a cereal bar, and though he doesn't understand why that is, he really doesn't want to start feeling sick again from overeating. He's powered through the headache so far, but

he's not sure whether or not he'd last if nausea decided to pay him a visit again.

But how would Yamaguchi react if I refused?

That one problem is what stopped the blonde from giving any sort of answer. His mouth opens and shuts, his eyes hover towards the food and then turn away, his fingers straighten out and then begin fidgeting again. What was the right answer to the question? Did he say yes and then possibly start feeling like absolute shit again? Or did he say no and have Yamaguchi possibly start questioning him even more?

It was then that Tsukishima didn't hesitate in digging the fingers of his left hand straight into his bandaged palm. He didn't wince or cry outâ€"didn't question why he did it. All he does is endure the pain and remind himself that he needs to give an answer and he needs to stop getting so tangled up in what the right or wrong response is.

"It's fine â€" I don't need anything more to eat."

When he says those words, Yamaguchi's face exudes nothing but pain and sadness and his eyes drop, but the two say nothing on the topic of food for the rest of lunch.

* * *

><p>After school practice improves somewhat more in comparison to the morning â€" Maybe I was just too tired? â€" less balls are attacking him and more are actually being blocked; his serves are going far enough to get over the net; and his receives aren't as bad as they had been. The coach is shouting at him less and Kageyama is finding fewer reasons to complain about his shitty performance. Really, everything's going fine, and no one's really questioning him like they were this morning.

Tsukishima doesn't feel half bad: his headache's dampened down to barely being noticeable, that nauseous feeling hasn't returned, balls have somehow been totally missing his left hand and he hasn't been thinking about that certain topic he doesn't want to think anything about at all. That is, until they move onto the three-on-three they'd been planning and he ends up on the opposite team to Hinata. Anyone who's felt that kid's quick spike knows that it's painful as fuck if you aren't expecting it, but though the blonde is definitely expecting it, he isn't expecting it to hit straight into the palm of his left hand.

He isn't expecting the overwhelming pain he feels in it either.

He hears himself give one right ugly cry out the moment he feels that excruciating pain spike through his whole hand, as if those cuts weren't limited to just his palm. His other hand cups around the back of his bandaged limb as he squeezes his eyes shut and bites down deep into his bottom lip to stop any more sounds from leaving, but that attempt at silencing himself fails when he realises that he isn't paying enough attention to his landing: the moment his feet touch the ground, he loses his balance and falls ungraciously onto his side. A loud "Shit!" escapes and Tsukishima's pretty sure he can feel his cheeks heating up.

To stop any more humiliating swears from leaving, he begins trying to focus on taking deep breaths—“which just becomes nothing more than a jumbled mess of pained breaths with little to no rhythm. He hears Yamaguchi's voice shouting his name and he thinks he can hear other people shouting his name too, but he's too focused on the burning being emitted from under the bandage to try and look at them.

“Are you okay?” Yamaguchi is the first one to ask and as much as he wants to nod and reassure his friend that yes, he's perfectly fine, and he just needs to go take a look under the bandage for a second, he knows his reaction is way too crazy for that to be believable.

Tsukishima shakes his head slightly before cracking open an eye and grating out a, “That really fucking hurt,” between clenched teeth.

“Sorry, Tsukishima.” Hinata's beside him now, looking straight at where his spike had hit. “I didn't mean to hit straight in your hand like that.” He's surprised that the little crow is worried at all, so feels compelled to give a decent reply back.

“S'not your fault,” he mutters, averting his golden eyes. “You just spiked it how you usually would—“ there's nothing wrong with that.” Tsukishima doesn't know how anyone reacts to his calm and non-accusing, non-mocking response and he doesn't want to. All he wants to do is get up, go somewhere and check on his hand. With that in mind, the boy takes his non-damaged hand and uses that to awkwardly attempt to push himself up. He's somewhat thankful for the pairs of hands that aid him in his sitting, and then standing, up and he gives a small nod in recognition for their help and in thanks.

“Do you want to go to the nurse's office and get it checked?” Daichi asks, face just that bit too serious for Tsukishima to be comfortable with.

“No, I'll be fine. I always take first aid stuff to school, so I can check it myself, if you're okay with me going back to the changing room.”

“Yeah, that's totally fine.”

“I have the key, so I'll go with you,” Takeda pipes up from just behind him.

Tsukishima is tempted to refuse him tagging along, that he would be fine going by himself because, really, the minute he takes that bandage off, it'll be more than obvious that it wasn't a knife that cut his palm. But there was something about their advisor's voice that sounded more like a, “I'm coming with you no matter what you say”, than a “May I come, too?” and that's enough to leave the blonde with no objections.

* * *

><p>The walk back to the changing room is filled with an odd tension that Tsukishima can't help but be confused about. There's no reason for there to be any ill feelings between him and the smaller teacher

that would cause such an uncomfortable silence, and something about the way those brown eyes seem to flick to him now and again makes it feel like there's something being left unspoken that the other wants to say.<p>

In fact, it reminds the boy of his walk with Yamaguchi that same morning, and a feeling of unease begins creeping into his gut.

"Uhâ€|Tsukishima-kun?"

Tsukishima gets the fright of his life when Takeda suddenly decides to talk as soon as they enter the changing room. He can tell from that somewhat timid tone that there's a question coming up â€" a question that Takeda knows won't make the blonde very pleased. That's when it really hits him that he's here, alone, with a teacher; a teacher that has access to his personal information; a teacher that has access to his family. The guy isn't his homeroom teacher, but he's a teacher all the same and, worse, the advisor of a club that he's a member of.

Shit.

"What is it, sir?" Tsukishima asks, bugs of nervousness crawling all through his body, sending shivers everywhere they go.

"Are you sure you're feeling all right?"

And again with that same question. Though he doesn't mean it to be, the sigh that escapes the blonde is more than obvious as he kneels down and begins pushing aside the things in his bag to get at the tub of equipment. "I'm feeling fine." It's a short, blunt answerâ€"one that almost seems like a warning for the smaller teacher not to continue with the questioning any further. But Takeda-sensei is a teacher â€" it's his job to interrogate me on this.

"Some of the other teachers have been telling me that you haven't been very focused during class and that's just not like you." Tsukishima scoffs to himself as he pulls out the green-lidded box. "And you didn't eat much for lunch either, did you?" The minute those words are spoken, that box is dropped on the ground with a thud and the first year is staring right up at Takeda beside him. His golden eyes are wide as he processes what was said and suddenly, he feels so unbelievably angry, angry enough that he can stick his nails into both palms and not give a shit about the pain he feels.

"â€|What?"

"You only ate a cereal bar, didn't you?"

Tsukishima's sure now how violently he's shaking trying to stop himself from shouting, trying to keep his voice as calm as he can make â€" getting angry at a teacher won't make anything better â€" and taking deep breaths seems to be all he can do anymore to just calm everything down but it's not, it's not doing anything because he knows, he knows why Takeda knows and he's not sure why he feels so frustrated, why he feels upset, and he brings in his bottom lip and bites down on it while he tries to stop his rage from bursting open and lashing out.

"Why did he tell you?" the blonde manages, voice quiet and trembling so unbelievably much.

"Because he's worried."

And those three words are all it takes to make every single emotion he's feeling to just vanish. Yamaguchi told him because he was worried. That boy told Takeda about him because he was stupidly paying attention to him; to Tsukishima Kei. He can't understand why someone would want to be worried about someone as despicable as him, and though he thinks there's a light feeling in his chest at that notion, something darker won't stop constricting around it anytime it tries to reach deep into his heart. That happy feeling is killed before Tsukishima can ever really feel it, and all that's left is nothing. The blonde feels like a kid as he flops back onto his bum and sits there, knees close to his chest, arms leaning across his knees.

Takeda's the one opening the box now—"pulling out everything he needs before Tsukishima stops him. "I only need a few plasters," he says, almost laughing at how stupid he was to not think of getting the plasters already in his bag for his palm than using the bandage. His voice is still quiet but it no longer trembles; it's simply filled with all the exhaustion he feels, all the exhaustion he's been trying to deny existed. It's not even been a day and I'm this tired.

"Is anything going on at home?"

Tsukishima can't help but flinch at the abrupt question, and begins taking off the bandage he'd sloppily wrapped around his hand to try and hide the nervousness building up inside of him. This is the time where he needs to focus on his response—"to try and find the right response" but he only has a second or two to do that in: it's nowhere near enough time. He takes a deep breath as discreetly as he can and then nonchalantly responds with, "No." Somehow, he manages to keep his voice steady and uninterested like usual, and some part of him's wondering if maybe his voice isn't quite hitting his ears right because butterflies are breaking free everywhere in his stomach and he almost feels sick from the nerves that it doesn't make sense for his voice to not be showing all of that.

"Are you sure?"

"Well, why wouldn't I be?" Tsukishima is perfectly aware of how rude he most likely sounds to Takeda but honestly, he's not sure if he cares. He doesn't want to have to deal with so many of the same questions every day. Maybe they'll get fed up and stop in a few days time if I just keep on denying them the answers. But the chances of that happening are way too slim and he knows it.

"If you're hiding something from me, then you're better off coming clean right now. Don't forget I can call home and figure out what's happening straight from your parents."

That was one thing that Tsukishima had known, but was one thing he had hoped Takeda wouldn't use. In all honesty, he doesn't want to have to be the one to say where his mother and Akiteru are, but he doesn't want his dad to know how he's been at school. Honestly, he's

surprised they're jumping on it so soon, but in a way, it makes sense—“all eyes have probably been focused on him since his stunt yesterday and it's somewhat unsettling to think of how much attention he's being paid.

When Tsukishima pulls the dressing off, he screws up his face at the smudges of blood around the indentations — Hinata's spike must have made them bleed again. Thankfully, Takeda had brought out an antiseptic wipe along with the plasters and he mutters a small, "Thanks" when the man rips open the packet and passes him the moist material. A silence spreads between them as the boy patches his hand back up again. Now that Takeda's seen the marks, Tsukishima is pretty sure he's caught on to what really caused the wound on his palm, but he doesn't say anything to him, and some part of him feels thankful for that.

In fact, he doesn't say anything even when he's done and the blonde is packing the box away. He's simply waiting patiently for Tsukishima to respond if he wants to respond or when he wants to respond. Takeda isn't pushing him, and it surprises the middle blocker a little. From what he'd heard, their advisor was a rather pushy fellow when it came to getting things done—though maybe that was only for getting their coach and for sorting out practice matches. He's pretty relieved that the Takeda speaking to him just now isn't the persistent one though, because he isn't sure how he'd have reacted to someone trying to seriously interrogate him.

"My mum and my brother were involved in a car crash and...they're in hospital," he eventually murmurs quietly, closing his bag and slowly standing up. The next time he looks at Takeda, there's nothing but pity on his features and Tsukishima has to look away; he isn't sure he would have lasted if he'd kept on looking at that expression on the teacher's face.

"I'm sorry. Are they okay?"

Takeda stands up, but neither of them move. All the blonde does is stare at the ground and turn his hands into fists as he softly mutters his response: "My brother's more stable. But I don't know about my mum. Either way, they could both still..." He takes a deep breath, leaving that one word unspoken. "My dad said he'd text me or call me if anything changes though." One of Takeda's hands is gently squeezing his shoulder by this point, but Tsukishima doesn't shove it away or complain about its presence. Surprisingly, he finds it oddly relaxing.

"Why not check your phone just now then, while we're here? There's no rush after all."

Golden eyes look down at the smaller man and for a while, he considers it. What if there is a text waiting there for him? What if that text is something bad? Does he want to know what it is right now while a teacher is here with him? But on the other hand, what if it's good news? That thought finalizes his decision for him and eventually, he gives a small, slow nod.

Tsukishima can both feel and see himself shaking as he finds his phone, and he's pretty sure Takeda can see his shivering as well, but he isn't focused on that—“all he's focused on is whether or not there's any mail for him. He has to take yet another deep breath as

he calms himself down, tells him that everything is fine and, hands still trembling, brings a finger down onto the round button at the bottom of his phone.

And that's when he sees it.

Sees that he's got a message from his father.

And that message has his eyes widening and his mouth opening.

His eyes scan over the message again and again, trying to confirm that it's real and when he manages to properly process his dad's message, he can't help but read it out loud just once:

_"__Akiteru's woken up."__

* * *

><p>AN: ** He's awake!

But this is an angst fic.

Be prepared for a fairly long scene in the hospital.

psst suggestions are totally fine

3. Day Two - Early Evening - Night

**A/N: **Yo. It's time for the third chapter.

I'm shit at writing all this feelings shit.

Shout out again to Teide for helping me with ideas and stuff.

I'd also like to note that I have Kei calling Akiteru by...Akiteru in this, simply because I don't like putting onii-chan for reasons I don't understand (I can't even remember if it's onii-chan or some other variation of it he calls his brother but w/e he's calling him Akiteru).

* * *

><p>When Tsukishima reaches the double doors, he can feel his heart pounding in his chest, but he's not sure if it's because of how fast he ran to the hospital, or if it's because of the nervousness he feels building up. Akiteru's awake. The minute he'd spoken the news, Takeda's face had lit up as he said how great that was but for some reason, Tsukishima couldn't figure out what he was feeling. No bright smile spread on his face, and no wave of relief washed over his heart. Instead, he'd just feltâ€¦frightened. At least, he'd thought it had been fear, but now that he thinks back, he isn't sure if that was quite rightâ€"not that he knows just what exactly he had felt now either. He doesn't even know what he's feeling right at this moment.

Takeda had ran back to the gym to get the boy's water and other belongings he might have left there and had told him to get changed and to go to the hospital right away â€" "I'm sure your brother will be ecstatic to see you!" â€" and just as he'd taken a foot out of the

door, he'd spun around and told him that he'd have to tell the coach about his situation as well, but really, Tsukishima was too confused about his feelings to really care so he'd simply nodded and began digging out his trousers. Staying in his t-shirt and hoodie " which Takeda was fetching " would be a lot more comfortable than wearing his usual full school attire, so all he'd really needed was his trousers and outdoor shoes.

The whole way to the hospital, Tsukishima hadn't been thinking anything other than, "What do I say?" and, "What do I do?" He didn't even know why his mum and Akiteru had been together in the first place" last time he'd checked, his brother was still staying away from home" but hospitals weren't a place where you were just supposed to attack patients with questions and, in all honesty, he wasn't even interested in an answer anyway. He didn't care about what had happened; he didn't care why Akiteru had been with his mother; he didn't care about who else was involved in the accident; he didn't care if anyone else had already died or if they were severely injured, because really, all that was important was that two of his family were in the hospital with wounds that he didn't even know the details behind and his mother was dying and Akiteru was probably dying too and he" couldn't do anything about that.

And now he knows why he was frightened.

Now that Akiteru was awake, he'd have to face his helplessness straight on, and he wasn't sure if he'd even be able to handle it.

Tsukishima notices his father leaving the caf  area and he speeds up his pace to catch up. As soon as his long arms can reach, he goes for tapping the man on the shoulder over shouting out. "Oh, Kei! Isn't it a bit early for you to be finished practice?"

"Takeda-sensei forced me to leave early and come here after I read the text," he explained, hoping to hell that his dad didn't ask why a teacher knew" not that he would have minded, he's sure, but it's not like he's ever been in a situation like this before to be able to accurately judge his father's reaction to anything. Thankfully, no further questions are asked of him and he relaxes just that tiny touch.

"Do you want anything to eat or something before we go?"

"Already had something on the way here." Well, more specifically, he'd had water on the way there, but he didn't want his dad to begin worrying about him because of his runaway appetite and he definitely didn't want him to suspect him of not eating enough either. He's gotten so used to people giving him back looks of disbelief at his answers that he feels somewhat surprised when his father accepts his response and begins walking to the ward. Forgot that that's the kind of answer people generally believe.

The closer they get to where his brother is staying, the more Tsukishima can feel that horrible nausea building up again. There's a headache forming too, and he can't help but begin fidgeting with his fingers and biting his bottom lip out of nervousness. Honestly, some part of him doesn't want to see what state Akiteru's in " if he was bad enough that he'd been admitted to ICU, just what would he look like? Kei can't even begin to imagine what sort of injuries his

brother's sustained and he doesn't want to ask or he's sure he'll feel worse, but he's pretty sure just seeing his brother is going to have him fidgety and unfocused and wanting to leave.

It's been a while since they've last spoken, too. And with the last proper memories of his brother being nothing short of goodâ€!

"Your mother hasn't woken up yet, but she's definitely doing a lot better than she was yesterday." Tsukishima can't help but jump when his father's voice suddenly assaults him, jolting him out of his thoughts.

"She's not out of the blue yet though, is she?" It's out of his mouth before he has time to think about it and he's suddenly regretting having spoken it, but they're his real thoughts and he knows there's no point in taking them back.

"Keiâ€!"

His father doesn't say anything to reassure him that everything will be all right and that's all the proof the boy needs to know that his mother's a lot worse off than Akiteru is. He holds back a sigh as he stares down at his feet skiffing along the white floor, and nothing else is exchanged between them besides a large, gentle hand resting on his back.

* * *

><p>Akiteru and his mother are in separate rooms and though part of that makes Tsukishima happyâ€"he really doesn't want to see what state his mother's in at the same time as Akiteruâ€"it just makes it clear to him how badly their bodies have been damaged.<p>

The minute he walks into the room Akiteru is being kept in, his blood runs cold and that nausea and headache come back to hit him at full force. Tsukishima doesn't understand the reason for most of the machines scattered around the room, but what he does know is that they're all attached to his brother, lying in the middle of the room, looking as pale as a ghost.

It's been so long since golden eyes have rested on his brother and the first time he sees him again is when he's dying. And that has his chest aching even more painfully than he imagined it would.

"Are you okay?" The blonde feels a hand on his shoulder and looks at his father behind him, only just noticing that he's stopped right in the road of the doorway and he knows that his father won't believe him if he says yes, but he nods anyway and slowly slides into the room, fingers pulled into loose fists and teeth clenched tight, but the closer he gets to Akiteru, the more he sees how ill he looks and the more he notices how many bandages there are and the more he notices all those tubes fixed into his body and he resorts to biting heavily down on his lip to stop anything from coming out.

All Tsukishima wants to do is rip every single foreign object out of his brother's body and run with him out of the hospital. But he knows that that won't helpâ€"that Akiteru needs those tubes in to help keep him alive; that Akiteru needs those machines connected to him if he wants to live. He's all too aware of how his father's gaze is glued to him as he nervously sits down on one of the seats beside his

brother's bed and it sends a shiver down his spine.

"Ah, Kei! You came to see me!" Tsukishima's head jerks up from the fingers now going through a cycle of interlacing and unlocking the minute he hears a quiet, slightly raspy voice from in front of him. Brown eyes fondly look over at the tall boy and the minute they do, the breath catches in his throat. Akiteru is dying. Akiteru is in pain. Yet how can he look so happy? How can he sound so happy? Despite how tired his brother looks, Kei can see that large, gentle smile clear as day and that friendly crease underneath his eyes.

Fingers now gripping tightly onto the fabric of his trousers, the blonde turns his head down and mutters, "Of course I did. Why wouldn't I?" He hears a chuckle come from the olderâ€"a genuine chuckleâ€"and it leaves Kei swirling in nothing but confusion. He doesn't understand this at all.

"I'm going to sit with your mum for now, okay? Her room's right next door if you need me." Tsukishima nods at his father's call, but doesn't look back, doesn't say anything out loud, just keeps staring down at his hands, finding it hard to stay still as the fabric rubs between his fingers. When the door slides shut, a silence spreads out between them for a long time and it just makes the blonde feel worse. He knows that Akiteru is waiting for him to speakâ€"is waiting until he feels comfortable enough.

But really, he isn't sure if he ever will be.

Wanting to break the silence more than anything, Tsukishima takes a deep breath in through his nose and slowly exhales through his mouth. "Soâ€|how are you feeling?" the boy eventually gets out, fingers fidgeting with each other as he turns his eyes up to look at the other still smiling as he turns his head to look more at his younger brother.

"I've felt better, but at least I'm alive, right?"

Tsukishima doesn't even linger on what's just been said because he knows that he'll counter it with something pessimisticâ€"he certainly knows that what he's thinking isn't the happiest of thoughts and if anything, he definitely doesn't want to pass it on to Akiteru; doesn't want Akiteru to linger on useless thoughts just like he's been doing the whole day.

"â€|Does it hurt?"

"It does, but it's really not that bad."

"Are youâ€|" just saying that because you're worried about me?_

The second half of the sentence remains unspoken, even after Akiteru gives him a questioning look; even after he tries to press him for the rest of what he was going to ask. But all Tsukishima can do is clench his trousers yet again and stare intently down at the white floor beneath his feet. He hadn't wanted to show his brother such a vulnerable side to him when he's the one that should be cared forâ€"when he's the one that should be scared and defencelessâ€"but really, the younger doesn't recall feeling as much fear pumping through his body as he feels now; even then, he isn't sure if it's

fear of being caught unable to cope or fear of his brother... 's condition not going in quite the way they want it to.

Now that Tsukishima's here, all he wants to do is leave. He wasn't sure what he wanted to say to his brother before he came in, he doesn't know what he wants to say to him now. Ever since Akiteru had moved out, Kei had rarely spoken to him. Even when he came back to visit, he was always holed up in his room, not even heading out to grace him with a simple hello. Actually, maybe our relationship had become strained even before he left. The day Tsukishima went to one of his brother's games, only to realise he wasn't playing but in fact, supporting, even after all he'd told him, was the day that the thread holding them together began to snap.

Neither were bringing it up though, and both were sure they knew the reason.

"And what about you?" Tsukishima is pulled from his thoughts by his brother breaking the silence this time and he reluctantly looks up, eyebrows scrunching up in confusion at the meaning behind the question. "How are you holding up?" That strangely bright smile that had been decorating Akiteru's face earlier had dulled, and instead, concern had somehow crept in.

And that was all it took to have Tsukishima beginning to shake in rage. Again with that fucking question. The wording was different but the meaning was the same: "Are you okay? Because you really don't look like it."

Kei takes another deep breath, but it comes out shaky and he's sure his brother can hear him and fuck he's screwing up he's screwing up so bad what is he doing he has to respond he can't just not respond he can'tâ€"

"Fine."

It's out of his mouth before he has time to think and he's silently cursing so much inside of his head that he's sure he'd have detention for months if his teachers could hear him now. That one word may as well have been "Lie"â€"it would have the exact same meaning, that's for sure. But Akiteru's expression is barely changing, if at all, and Tsukishima can feel the calm he's trying to tell himself he's in beginning to break and what the fuck, what is he supposed to do now? Fucking dammit: why does he matter? He's not the one lying in a hospital bed, tubes and wires everywhere sticking into probably every damn fucking piece of visible skin, trying to be happy and not make people worry while there's still a chance he could die and the pain present making that truth all too clear! So why is he asking about me?

"You don't have to be okay, Kei," the older eventually says. "No one's expecting you to be. If you keep it all bottled up and tell people lies about how you feel, you're going to regret it later."

What; just like how you told me so many lies back when you were in high school then regretted it when I actually found out the truth? Akiteru's voice is frighteningly stern, but it's not enough to scare that spiteful thought away from Tsukishima's mind. It takes a lot of willpower not to say it out loud, and he hopes to God that there's no

frown visible on his face.

"I said I was fine and I meant it, Akiteru," Kei eventually manages to throw back, voice somehow calm but he could still feel it raising in volume and he isn't meaning it to and he's trying so hard to calm himself down but he can tell it isn't working from the way his palm is starting to hurt from him gripping the fabric enough that his fingers have reached all the way to the plasters now covering the indentations.

"_Kei." _Akiteru speaks with a warning tone now, as if Tsukishima _has _to tell him and that's all it takes to _really _piss the blonde off.

"Why are you asking me how I feel!? Why does _everybody _keep asking me!? It's _you_ who's in the goddamn fucking hospital!" Tsukishima doesn't notice when he stands up, but the worried frown on Akiteru's face has the boy guiltily looking down at the floor as he lowers himself back down onto the blue plastic. "â€¦Sorry," he mutters, picking at the index fingernail of his left hand as the anger dissipates into a bucket-load of embarrassment and shame. It isn't fair to be shouting at his tired and injured brother and Tsukishima knows it, and the guilt he feels won't stop tightening in his chest, clenching round his heart until he's sure it's going to burst.

"It's all right," Akiteru reassures gently, a small smile now re-adorning his features. "But what are you talking about 'everybody keeps asking you'? As in, asking if you're okay?"

"Wellâ€¦yeah," he murmurs quietly, sheepishly glancing up at his brother. "I'm pretty sure everyone in the volleyball team's asked me at least once and so many teachers asked me as well and Takeda-sensei even pretty much confronted me by myself just to ask me that, and every time I give them an answer, they just look at me like I'm spouting nothing but lies to them. I mean, if they're not going to believe me, then why ask in the first place?"

The smile is pained now as the older replies: "It's just because they care about you, Kei." The head of blonde hair rises up to show a screwed-up face, as if Akiteru had just said the most preposterous thing in the world, but regardless, he continues. "A lot of the time it's when someone is clearly lying about themselves that it becomes clear something's wrong. They were just looking out for youâ€"no, screw that, they _are _looking out for you."

"Why would they care about _me_?" Those six words are enough to have Akiteru's eyes widening and a pitying expression laid clear as day on his face. It's that pitying look that nearly sends Tsukishima in a rage all over again, but this time, he's able to control his angerâ€"just. _What's with that look? _He wants to say it out loud, but he knows that it's one of those questions that'll backfire on him.

"Well, why wouldn't they?"

Tsukishima's answer is immediately projected in front of his eyes, but his mouth isn't quite able to form those words. Many times does his mouth open and shutâ€"his eyes flicker from the ground, to his hands, back up to Akiteru. Eventually, the only way the blonde manages to force the response out of him is by never removing his

golden-eyed gaze from his hands and releasing the fabric of his school trousers and digging his fingers directly into his palms to remind himself of how much worse the pain he feels from that is compared to how much it'll hurt to say what he's about to say to his brother.

"Because there's no reason for any of them to want to care for me." Kei takes a deep breath before adding just one more section: "Someone like me doesn't deserve to be cared for."

Tsukishima never sees the look of shock and pain and worry and confusion and anger on Akiteru's face the minute he responds to his question. The younger was never one to frequently voice his feelings out loud â€“ he never wrote them down either. Any time someone asked him, he would throw on a façade and give them what they wanted. But this was one of those times where that façade wasn't working as well as it should, and that was one thing Tsukishima didn't want to accept, no matter how well he knew how true it was.

Tsukishima has never been one for making friends. It's not that he's particularly against the idea, he just doesn't really know what a 'friend' is. What exactly makes someone a friend? If they're nice to you, are they your friend? If they help you out, are they your friend? If they do things for you, are they your friend? Or are they just manipulating you so that they can benefit from your good points? Tsukishima is both tall and intelligentâ€“not once has he ever been happy to have been bestowed with those traits. When he was young, he always assumed the other boys in his class befriended him because they liked him â€“ he always thought that having people to talk to would make him happy.

But in reality, it just made him feel worse.

Tsukishima has never felt as lonely as he did back then. To have friends makes one happy. To have those friends ignore you unless they needed you for your height or your brain makes one unbelievably lonely. For a while, the blonde went along with themâ€“thought that it was better than having no one. But after overhearing snide comments about him when his 'friends' had thought he had left, he'd never felt more lonely. After that, the only thing he could do was refuse requests to 'hang out' with the 'friends' he thought he had made. All that lead to was badmouthing straight to his face; not that he'd ever told anyone living in his house.

Trust is a troublesome conceptâ€“a concept that brings nothing but unnecessary fear and loneliness and hurt into one's life.

With that belief in mind, Tsukishima erased the word 'trust' from his dictionary. If he didn't trust anyone, he'd live a much happier life with little conflict that would affect him emotionally. Being spiteful to others and forcing them to keep their distance is something Tsukishima finds comfort in; it makes him feel safe, because being rejected or insulted by them doesn't hit him as hard. If he hasn't tried to befriend them in the first place, then being hated isn't something he needs to care about.

It's as Tsukishima sorts through these thoughts that something occurs to him. The volleyball teamâ€|have no reason to care about me. Yet regardless, they asked him questions out of concernâ€|?

That isn't quite right.

"A little birdie told me that you're a regular on the team even though you're still just a first year. If they didn't care about you, they wouldn't have noticed you enough to make you one, right?"

That isn't right at all.

"I'm only a regular because of my height. They only bother asking me if I'm all right because!"

It's a nuisance to deal with me when I'm not in good form..

Tsukishima can't help but pull into himself, leaving the rest of the sentence unspoken yet again. For some reason he can't comprehend, there's an unbelievably uncomfortable feeling constricting round his chest—something akin to pain, yet it feels nothing like the pain he gets when a volleyball slams into him harder than he expects it to. Unlike before, Akiteru doesn't prompt him for the rest of the sentence. He knows that this isn't the best of topics; making him say more than what he wants to would do nothing but make the situation worse and he's well too aware of that.

"Hey, hey, hey," Akiteru quickly says, attempting to get his attention before he ends up too far down. "Don't forget that I'm here, too. I care about you, Kei."

"You only care about me because you have to." It's quiet, but the rage in his voice is clear.

"What ar—"

"You only care about me because I'm your brother! Because you can't just ignore me while I'm a part of your family!" Tsukishima's eyes are beginning to water by this point and it doesn't go unnoticed by the older.

"Kei, are you— Are you still—angry about me lying to you?" Akiteru awkwardly asks, scratching a non-existent itch on his head.

"I— No. That was years ago—I don't have any reason to be mad at you."

"Then do you still care about me?"

Tsukishima's eyes widen at the question. "I— Of course I do. This isn't just a visit I felt obligated to do because you're family." The blonde trails off as he nears the end of the sentence and it clicks.

At least, it was supposed to have clicked. But the minute he begins to realise that maybe, just maybe, someone genuinely cares about him, alarm bells ring in his brain and his army quickly deploys with the warning signal, immediately shooting the thought away, preventing him from ever feeling like he has any right to be loved—stops him from ever thinking that perhaps there might actually be a reason for people to care about someone as despicable as himself.

"Kei?"

Golden eyes stare back down at the blinding white floor as Akiteru calls out his brother's name. With no response being elicited, the older heads for something different.

"So, have you blown up the kitchen yet?"

Tsukishima looks up almost immediately, face screwed up in confusion and Akiteru can't help but laugh at the wonderfully honest reaction. "Mum's not there, after all," he continues, smirk wide on his face. "Pretty sure I saw you burn a microwave pizza once."

"That was when I was a kid!" he protests, a light blush starting to show across his cheeks. "I can cook perfectly fine now."

"Oh yeah? So what did you cook for dinner yesterday? Toast?"

"Of course not! Iâ€œ" Tsukishima is speaking before he means to. His response is automatic â€œ something that stems from being teased by his brother so often as a kid. He knows he's just dug himself into a hole that he'll never be able to climb back out of. Never should he have hesitated. He knows that he should've said a lie; just came up with something that he knows he could have made. It could even have been a microwave meal for all it mattered. Akiteru would tease him, but at least he wouldn't question him. A microwave meal was nice and easy. It was a choice that made sense after returning home from learning that two of your closest family members were in bad shape.

But no. He went and hesitated.

I'm so fucking stupid._

"â€œ|Kei?" When the blonde looks over at his older brother after the utterance of his name, he can't help but notice that not a single sign of a smile was on his face. Not even a fake smile was there. All that was present was a frown. A pitying frown that has Tsukishima looking away for the billionth time in the one visit. "What did you have for dinner last night?" Tsukishima opens his mouth to speak, but Akiteru quickly interrupts, almost as if he was aware that what was about to be said to him wasn't the truth, "Please don't lie to me, Kei. I wasn't kidding when I said I cared about you. So please."

Tsukishima can see his sight beginning to blur when the older reaches as far as he can before beckoning for one of his hands when he can't reach any further. He blinks in an attempt to help chase the mist away, but when he fails, he quickly looks at his feet and takes off his glasses to rub his eyes with his fingers, trying to pretend he has something stuck in them, despite knowing it won't fool Akiteru. When he re-attaches his glasses, he tentatively reaches out and grips his brother's slightly cold hand that somehow manages to resonate warmth within him and he can't help but squeeze without really thinking about it.

The younger opens and shuts his mouth many times over and nothing manages to escape. He wants to trust his brother, he really does, but saying it out loud is difficult for him, because he knows exactly

what his answer is and he knows exactly why that answer is the truth. A reassuring squeeze and gentle smile from Akiteru is screaming at Kei that it's all right. He can say whatever he needs to say without being ridiculed. Using those gestures as fuel, the boy finally mutters a, "Iâ€|didn't have anything for dinner," trailing off and averting his gaze as he reaches the end.

"Is there any real reason?" Akiteru softly asks, beginning to rub his thumb over the back of his hand.

That gesture fuels something entirely different though, and before Tsukishima realises it, he's yanking his hand right out of his brother's grip. "Please, justâ€|stop. You're hurt. Stop worrying about me. Stop asking stupid questions about me."

"Kei, those questions aren't stuâ€""

"I said, stop."

"No! You're just as importaâ€""

"Akiteru, I mean it."

"Kei, just listen toâ€""

"I fucking told you to stop!"

Tsukishima is perfectly aware of his rude language, of the pain coursing through his palm through clenched fists, of the pained look on Akiteru's face, of how he's standing up now, blue chair having fallen backwards onto the floor, of how loud he'd raised his voice, but just like always, he'd done it without thinking. He'd fucked up again. Denial would get him nowhere. Golden eyes can't even manage a glance at the man lying on the hospital bed.

He doesn't even move when he hears the door slide open and a deep voice speaks his name in question. He knows it's his dad, but he can't manage to look at even him. I'm a disgrace to the Tsukishima name. That was all he'd ever thought. He'd never once thought of himself as the number one child he was sure his mother and father had wanted from him. He was never that caring talkative brother that Akiteru was to him. He has people to repay without the means to do it. He knows that.

That wasn't right.

He had the means to do it.

What he didn't have was the personality; the motivation; the willingness. To make his life actually worth something to people other than obligatory feelings that come with being a family member or a classmate or a team member was the one thing Tsukishima was frightened of more than anything.

"You're hurting, too, Kei. I can tell, you know. We all can." Tsukishima doesn't see the anger and hurt and worry and fear all showing on Akiteru's face, but the tone of his voice makes it all clear.

"I want to go home, Dad."

Before anyone can say anything more, Tsukishima grips his bag tightly in his hand and walks briskly out of the hospital room.

* * *

><p>No matter how many conversations his father tried to strike up on the way home, Tsukishima didn't utter a single word. Golden eyes stayed fixed on the ground, on his hands, on his legs, on his feet, just anywhere away from his father. He couldn't find it in him to look at the man beside him, driving the car in the darkness that seemed to spread out everywhere the blonde looks. In fact, the boy's pretty sure that if he were to turn to his right right now, his father wouldn't even be there. It would be nothing but black, empty space.</p>

Even when they enter the house, Tsukishima doesn't say anything before heading up the stairs to his bedroom. He's pretty sure he hears something resembling his father's voice, but the absolute black spreading out around him blurs the words enough that he isn't sure if the man's even talking to him, so he completely ignores it, pretends that his voice doesn't exist in this world of hisâ€"and in a moment, it's erased.

The first thing the blonde does when he enters his room is turn around and shut the door. He doesn't slam it nor does he try to soften the sound as he closes it; he just swings it shut, putting in as little effort as he needs to to make sure it shuts properly, just like he always does. He heads over to his desk and sets down his bag beside it, for easy access during the studying he plans to do before he sleeps, then swiftly finds clothes comfortable for lounging around and sleeping in. The smell emanating from him reminds him that he hasn't showered since volleyball practice and, feeling gross, goes for as quick a shower as he can manage.

Tsukishima doesn't remember what happens after he decides to clean himself, but before he knows it, he's back in his room, towel round his neck, hair occasionally dripping water down his back. He just stands there, at the entrance of his room, staring at the floor and he continues doing it. He just stares, stares and stares some more before he eventually takes one step, then another step, and yet another, until he's unconsciously reaching for the phone lying turned off in his bag.

When he turns it back on, he notices that he has a couple of texts, and he knows straight away who they're from. _Doesn't take a genius to know it's Yamaguchi. _What he reads when he opens it is something that has him quivering in the rage that had tried to stop itself from showing. Before he knows it, he's shouting some sort of aggressive sound and his phone is flying onto his bed. What was simply a phone being thrown turns into him sending everything he can find flying across his room, even his bin. He shouts the whole time, arms and legs stinging from banging into the objects he's thrown around.

Tsukishima isn't even aware of when he ends up curled up in a corner of his room, hands entangled in the blond strands of his hair as he sobs his heart out, tears of guilt and loneliness and self-loathing and anger streaming down his face. His glasses aren't on his face anymoreâ€"they're lying totally shattered on the wooden floor of his

roomâ€"but he can't find it in him to care. He doesn't even know what's lying where; doesn't know how much he'll most likely need to replace.

But one thing he does know that doesn't need replaced is his phone, still sitting on his bed, with Yamaguchi's unanswered messages lying within:

Tsukki, are you okay? Takeda-sensei just suddenly came flying into the hall saying you were leaving early, but he refused to say why. Did something happen?

Please tell meâ€"everyone's been really worried about you.

* * *

><p>AN: **you dont have to be okay kei

IF ANYONE SAYS, "but what about Yamaguchi?" WITH THE WHOLE FRIENDS THING,

I'll cry.

Don't worry, that's going to be covered. Just not right now when Tsukishima barely knows what he's thinking.

In case you're wondering why his dad didn't come up when Tsukishima was thrashing about his room...it'll be answered in the next chapter.

Also, don't forget to give me suggestions!

btw i totally forgot about new manager girl im going to have to work her in amn't i

End
file.